

# **The Reviews Are In: GOP Budget Reconciliation Bill Makes Wrong Choices, Targets Seniors, Most Vulnerable**

**Democrats are committed to a deficit reduction plan that asks all Americans to contribute their fair share and prevents sequestration from occurring through a balanced mix of spending cuts and revenues. Unfortunately, the Republican [plan](#) is not balanced and makes the wrong choices by ending the Medicare guarantee and targeting the most vulnerable among us, while cutting taxes for millionaires and billionaires. Their reconciliation bill on the Floor today:**

- Slashes food assistance by 35.8 million – reducing food stamps to all recipients and cutting access to SNAP to nearly two million people at a time when families can least afford it.
- Permanently eliminates the Social Services Block Grant program, which provides assistance for roughly 23 million Americans, including:
  - Child care and related assistance for 4.4 million children,
  - “Meals on Wheels” and other home-based services for nearly 1.7 million older Americans,
  - Child protective services for 1.8 million at-risk children,
  - Transportation, respite care and other services for nearly 1 million disabled individuals.
- Puts our nation at risk of another financial crisis by ending our ability to deal with banks that are “too big to fail.”
- Politicizes the process of funding the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, an office created to protect consumers from predatory practices that contributed to the financial crisis.
- Eliminates the Medicaid and CHIP Maintenance-of-Effort (MOE) requirement included as part of the Affordable Care Act, putting 300,000 children at risk of losing health insurance coverage, according to CBO.
- Cuts the Prevention and Public Health Fund, which provided 61 communities and states with funding in fiscal year 2011 to implement health and wellness programs and benefitted approximately 120 million Americans, according to HHS.
- Targets federal employees by cutting gross federal employee pay by 5% by increasing employee contributions to FERS (from 0.8% to 5.8% of gross salary) and CSRS (from 7% to 12% of gross salary) pension programs, at a time when federal employees are already under a two-year pay freeze.

**The reviews are in and it’s clear the Republican budget makes the wrong choices:**

**AARP:** “...AARP believes the proposal lacks balance and could jeopardize the health and economic security of older Americans, as well as their families... On behalf of our millions of members and all older Americans, we reiterate our concerns about the harm this reconciliation proposal could cause Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries, as well as other older Americans and their families. We strongly urge you to enact a reconciliation package that will better protect the interests of our nation’s seniors and their families.”

**Catholic Charities USA, Jewish Council for Public Affairs, Association of Jewish Family & Children’s Agencies, The Jewish Federations of North America, Lutheran Services in America, and National Council of Churches:** “As groups of faith that provide critical support for those living on the

margin, we write to urge you to reject the House Budget Committee's proposal to repeal funding for the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG)... SSBG plays an important role in the types of services provided by our organizations to low-income people. The elimination of funding would disproportionately impact the most vulnerable populations by impairing our ability to provide services that help children in need of child care, youth in need of intervention and prevention services, and older Americans and persons with disabilities who might otherwise need to be placed in institutional care."

**NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby:** "You are faced with the choice of supporting programs which provide food... through TEFAP, housing through homeless assistance, healthcare through Medicaid and Medicare. Or, you can choose to provide additional tax expenditures to those with incomes of hundreds of thousands of dollars each year – frequently through financial transactions rather than through labor... NETWORK holds that the only moral decision is to vote 'NO' on this legislation."

**InterReligious Working Group on Domestic Human Needs:** "While we must address our deficits, we must not do so at the expense of low-income families, and we urge you to prioritize poor and vulnerable populations in federal budget decisions.... Because of the cuts to programs and services to low-income individuals, we urge you to vote against the reconciliation bill."

**The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights:** "The cuts in the Ryan bill would have a devastating impact on the communities we represent, including young children, students, older people, the jobless, the hungry, and the uninsured. The House Budget Committee has approved a set of spending cuts that range from unwise to downright unconscionable..."

**Feeding America:**" Cutting SNAP spending during this time of unprecedented need is simply wrong, as is placing the burden of cuts on the shoulders of those we are least able to bear it. The need for food assistance has never been greater. Coming at a time of record need and at a time when many state and local programs serving low-income people have been significantly reduced, other federal safety net programs are facing cuts, and the charitable system is stretched to the breaking point, cuts to SNAP would be devastating for struggling families and communities across the country."

**National Education Association (NEA):** "This bill makes the wrong choices for our nation – opting to place the burden for the nation's financial crisis squarely on the shoulders of the middle class and the poor, while failing to ask anything of those most able to contribute toward economic recovery."

**Committee for Education Funding (CEF):** "Solving our nation's fiscal situation and reducing the debt can't and won't happen simply by further cutting federal spending and squeezing education and other nondefense discretionary spending. We urge Congress to replace the sequester with a balanced approach to deficit reduction, such as included in the substitute by Rep. Van Hollen, and to invest in education, which is an investment in our fiscal future and our societal well-being."

**American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, American Diabetes Association, and American Heart Association:** "...A number of the cuts proposed through the budget reconciliation legislation would be harmful for Americans living with chronic disease by making it more difficult to access needed health care and undermine efforts to prevent and manage these devastating illnesses."

**HIV/AIDS Organizations:** “We cannot afford to retreat in our battle against HIV and AIDS and to end support for the health care safety-net programs that are vital to millions of the most vulnerable Americans. Vote ‘NO’ on the Sequester Replacement Act of 2012 (H.R. 4966).”

**American Public Health Association:** “This misguided legislation would not solve our nation’s deficit problems and instead would impose significant cuts to important safety net programs, cut public health funding and set the country on a dangerous path toward deeper cuts in nondefense discretionary spending down the line.”

**March of Dimes:** “[We] urge you to oppose the Sequester Replacement Reconciliation Act. This bill would undercut vital health care and public health programs serving pregnant women, infants, and children.”

**National Council of La Raza (NCLR):** “Like all Americans, Latinos are concerned with the economy and how the deficit affects it, and are looking to lawmakers to develop solutions that prevent our nation’s children from shouldering tomorrow’s debt. Congress and the Obama Administration agreed to a spending and deficit reduction proposal in the Budget Control Act of 2011, which included deep cuts to programs critical to Latinos and other Americans through a sequester of funds if Congress failed to agree on a long-term budget. H.R. 4966 would renege on that agreement and make deeper cuts to these programs. We believe that addressing our nation’s economic challenges requires a balanced approach...”

**National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association:** “These actions undermine the federal government’s ability to attract and retain the high level of skilled talent it needs to deal with the challenges facing us. Singling out federal employees for disparate treatment threatens to do permanent harm to a federal civil service critical to meeting the increasingly complex and deeply important tasks of government. At a time when more is being asked of our government, the American public deserves an engaged and efficient workforce, not one that members of Congress characterize as the source of our country’s budget problems.”

**Easter Seals:** “The policies proposed in this bill would be devastating to people with disabilities. The bill increases funding for federal defense programs and offsets this new spending with cuts to “domestic” programs. This would result in untenable cuts to programs that help children and adults with disabilities live, learn, work and play in their communities.”